Diary Of Yesuvahini Savarkar

(1918)

Shriram Prasanna

In the 11th year, the name Jaritra was established, the 11th year and...

My relationship with my husband — how I met him and how our introduction happened at my wedding, I will tell.

At the time of our wedding, I was sitting in the Deni, riding in a procession. Just then, these two boys, who were my age, came and stood at the door, and in conversation, asked “Where is the bride? Grandmother, our aunt is at so-and-so’s place.” They asked, “Who are you and what are your names?” They said, “This is our aunt’s family,” and introduced themselves: “This is my younger brother, his name is Naramal Damodar Savarkar. My name is Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, and our father is so-and-so. The one who is now present, his name is Ganesh Damodar Savarkar.” Hearing all this, my mother felt very happy and blessed, and immediately my mother said that these are intelligent, educated, and strong boys. Hearing all this, I was listening with great joy and a full heart, and my heart was filled with love and blessings. That is why I say — seeing such loving, delicate, and tender figures, I felt that from such figures one receives love, and from them comes happiness. What I have written here, I don’t think this is any exaggeration. All this conversation was going on when our...

...our brother-in-law (Bhaoji) said, “Where have you all been sitting?” and “Our sister-in-law (Vahini) is standing near Phobji, tell her that I want to sit near Vahini and see all the rituals.” My elder said, “As it is, one should set aside this, your Vahini will stand nearby, that will satisfy my mind.” And sitting nearby, I watched all the rituals — the exchanging of garlands, tying of the Kankan (marriage bracelet), etc. Everything was done.

Even after going home, every day of the wedding festivities, we would see each other. There were rituals of serving food to the Vahini, giving Vahini seven morsels, giving curd to the Vahini, and so on, and quickly there was a feeling that “now Vahini has become ours.”

Thus the eight days of the wedding were over. We were ready to go back to our home. Everyone was taking leave. My mother was consoling me, saying, “We will bring you to visit soon, we won’t keep her for too many days, maybe just a month or so.” While this conversation was going on, our brother (Bhai) came and said to my mother, “Mother, don’t worry at all. We will take care of Vahini’s eyes and do proper treatment. We will also send letters, and Menatai

and our people will be there." Having said all this, Mother, with tears, felt heavy-hearted...

...some sadness was felt, and worrying too, but her fate is what had to be. Having accepted this, everyone set off. All night, lying on the cots, at sunrise, we set out on the cart on the road. At this time, our brother-in-law (Bhaoji) said, "What a beautiful time this is — see how the rays of the sun are delighting the eyes and the mind." But Vahini could not see any of this. As the sun rose, he said, "Look at the peacocks — how they have started dancing, and that flock of deer is running about." "Yes, that is true, but poor thing, she is sitting with her eyes closed." He said, "I will bring water and wash your eyes," and so he brought water and I opened my eyes.

Just then, the cart arrived at the village. Then we got down. But that day, we had to go to a different house, not our own. We got down at another place, they held my hand, took me inside, sat me down, and said, "Vahini, you eat now and then sleep." Having said this, they themselves bathed, finished eating, and went home. They started telling all their friends, "Come to our house tonight to see our Vahini."

Again, our brothers came and said, "Vahini has not washed her eyes with the opium water, she should have." "If she doesn't wash them, I will scold her." So they told our brother-in-law, "Babu, get the medicine mixed — Vahini needs eye drops." They sent a message accordingly and came back, told her everything, and I went to sleep.

Then they came and said, "Vahini, get up, now we'll go to our own house. You'll have to come with the customary rituals, etc. Let your eyes be washed for a little while, and then we'll go home and send a servant to bring you." Saying this, the mother-in-law (Sasubai) brought the eye-washing medicine, and immediately Bhaoji (brother-in-law) placed my head on his lap and started washing my eyes. It must have been barely a short while when the eye medicine was applied and the compresses were applied. Just then, the servant and Bhaoji came to take me home and said, "Vahini, everything is ready. Let's go to our house now." Saying this, they told the servant, "Even if Vahini walks slowly on her feet, that will be fine." Saying this, he lifted me up, and we went home. The worship of the Goddess (Devi) was performed, etc.

Our brother-in-law (Bhaoji) told all his friends, "Accept this Khadishakkar (sugar candy), and know that we have named our Vahini — Saraswati."

Everything was completed, and in two or three days, all the swelling in the eyes subsided. And our Bhaoji resumed all his former routine — going to school, studying, reading, writing — everything started again. In the morning, waking up, doing morning ablutions, bathing, etc., and while going to school, he would tell my Vahini's caretaker, "Menatai, put drops in Vahini's eyes, give her medicine, and make almond milk for Vahini…"

"…do all this and then go to school." And upon returning from school, he would ask, "Vahini, did you take your medicine? Did you eat the Sheera (semolina pudding)?" and so on — checking everything. Whatever had been done, that was good; whatever hadn't been done, he'd say, "It hasn't been done," and then he'd get it done.

After meals, if we were playing something, in between, at two o'clock, it was time to go to school again. And at around four o'clock, they'd come back again for water and refreshments. Then everyone would sit together in a circle to eat snacks, and then there would be such teasing and fun that you can't even ask! The snacks in our house — we'd run here and there to grab them.

During such fun times of snacking, in between I would say, "You dark-dark one, Githa Jogale Karachi Mesu" — teasing Bhau (brother) like this, and he, in return, would grab my wrists and lift me up high, and then I would scream. Then our Bhaoji would make me promise, "Will you say that again? Say you won't," and then I'd say, "No, I won't do it again — but if I don't do it, then you must lift me up!" — saying such things.

Then Bhaoji would go to school again, and again at five o'clock, they'd return. As soon as they came, children would be at the door waiting to play, and as soon as they arrived, off they'd go to play…

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…then again after eating, one would sleep. Such was the routine. Then the days came for me to go to my maher (maternal home). So we performed the haldi-kumkum (turmeric-vermilion ceremony) at home. Still, Bhaoji's (brother-in-law's) fussing continued constantly — "Grandmother, take out my such-and-such, the castor oil, take out the rangoli (decorative patterns), one or two things to tell — what are you packing for Vahini's gifts? What all are you putting on her person?" — such constant asking and telling was going on.

In the meantime, he himself drew a rangoli and said to everyone, “How nice! What a beautiful rangoli I’ve drawn! Vahini, do you know how to draw one? Let me draw one now.” I said, “I don’t know much, but sitting here, let me describe two or three designs — make one like a plate (thali).” I told him so, and he said, “First, Mother should do this,” and told everyone, laughing.

Let me just say this much — our Bhaoji had a great passion for rangoli designs, and he was also skilled in paper-cutting craft work. But leaving that aside and returning to the earlier topic — the gifts (deni) etc. were packed, the farewells proceeded, and the women started giving blessings. Since my wedding had just recently taken place, each lady would ask me to take her name (in the ukhana — a traditional rhyming couplet mentioning the husband’s name), and I would stand silently near each lady. When a lady would leave, our Bhaoji would say to me, “You stood silently again, Vahini? You’ve learned so much and yet where…”

“…is all that learning?” While this was being said, more ladies were yet to come, and Bhaoji had to get up and go. Thus, evening came, the ladies stopped coming, and then it was decided that I should perform the Vasant Puja (spring worship). Our Bhaoji explained what the Vasant Puja entails and what customs are involved. The Mami (maternal aunt-in-law) explained everything — “First, you must worship the instruments, wash the feet, apply sandalwood paste (gandha), put on the tilak (vermilion mark), sprinkle gulal (red powder), take the rui-rapat (cotton wick offering), and for each deity, separate ukhanas (couplets) must be recited.” All this was explained.

Then they started the preparations. After finishing meals and everything, the Vasant Puja began. First, for each item, separate ukhanas were recited as customary. All the ukhanas were completed. Then it was my turn to apply haldi-kumkum and take the rui-rapat. Then our Bhaoji said, “Now we too must recite an ukhana and apply haldi-kumkum to Vahini.” He recited some ukhana. After all this was done, everyone went to their respective places.

I will write about ukhanas further ahead. But let me continue — our Bhaoji was young, that is true, but he had a great passion for reading. Our village was in the countryside, but…

…four or five newspapers used to come — Pune Vaibhav, Gurakhi, Kesari, and Jagaddhitechhu, and some others which I don’t remember now. But all those papers had to be brought, read, and given to their respective subscribers. If

he saw a novel somewhere — read it. Saw a story — read it. Saw a book — he would read it. Despite being so young, he had such a passion for reading.

One day, after the meal was done, hands washed, and someone was playing something, everybody went home. The loincloth (langoti) of the neighbor's — all the group there started laughing. Then he went home and said, "I had to wash the loincloth, that's why I did that." After that, we all laughed. Now, fun and amusement were going on.

Meanwhile, the day for me to go to my maher (maternal home) arrived. Bhaoji said, "Vahini, do come back quickly. I won't be able to pass the time without you. Don't stay too many days — come back in four months for the Mangala Gauri (festival)." This conversation happened, and I went to my maher.

When I returned again, a Pragat Gauri (a religious ceremony) was being held at our house, and for that, their maternal sister had come to our house. On this day, there were certain things that should not be revealed, and our Bhaoji — that is, my maternal...

...sister-in-law (Nanand) told us. Then, in the evening, when we sat down for snacks (faral), our Bhaoji came there and said, "Whoever wants anything, tell me and I'll serve it." Just then, our female relative said, "I want rice (tandul)." So our Bhaoji got up, came to my plate, and started asking, "What do you want?" At that time, I didn't write anything down, I just made gestures. After the snacks were over, he asked me, "Vahini, you can't read or write? Has no one taught you?" I said, "No." Then he said, "From now on, I will teach you."

That night, our Bhaoji stayed up with us. Sitting on the swing (zopala), they played games — the children spent that night beautifully like this.

Similarly, on two Tuesdays, a simple puja (worship) was to be sent. These preparations were done at home. In the same manner, the Istavali puja was also performed. On that occasion, our Bhaoji had such fun — he told Mami, "Mami, you go to sleep now. I'm feeling sleepy." I didn't understand his mischief. I truly lay down and fell asleep. As soon as I was asleep, he got up and tied my hands and feet, and then started teasing and joking with me. Then I got angry. He said, "If you don't like it..."

"...I won't joke around anymore." And the next day, he carried me on his shoulders (kavdi yatra — a playful custom), and then I got even more angry. On the third day, our grandmother (Ajje-Sasubai) said, "Mesu (the girl) is

taller than Baba (the boy).” Then our Bhaoji said, “Vahini is not at all taller — let’s measure and see.” He said, “The Pragat ceremony is done,” and came inside the house and said, “Vahini, come, let’s go there and have a look, just once, to see if it’s true.” Saying this, he took me to the door and stood next to me, and then I started laughing. Then he said, “See? Vahini is taller now!”

Such days were passing, and the time came for me to go to my maher again. And accordingly I went. But from now on, things changed — I wasn’t just at my maher. She (a relative) had come for Diwali, and our Bhaoji sent a message with her saying, “Send Vahini along with us.” But my mother-in-law (chul-sasuni) did not send me.

Then after some time, the grandmother (Ajje-Sasubai), Mame-Sasubai — nobody came. The Brahmin was coming for cooking because of the scholarship. Mamaji had kept funds for the scholarship. Bhaoji’s final examination had just taken place. That was the scholarship money...

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...because he stayed for two or three days and then left. Then there were some food items that I could not make at all. So some things these girls taught me, and some things Guruji (the priest) taught me. When guests came, we two would cook together, and then naturally...

Bhaoji’s such routines were going on. Then he remembered that “my Vahini cannot read,” and he made a firm resolve to teach me. Within fifteen days, I was able to read everything clearly, and now I could read well. Then our Mamaji — meaning uncle — said to Bhaoji, “Why are you getting distracted by all this? What are you teaching her? She’ll just ruin her eyes again.” He said this, and Bhaoji obeyed his father’s words and stopped teaching me directly. But by then, enough had been done, and I went to my maher. The knowledge I had gained — this is the eleventh year’s account, and that is all for now.

Now, the account of the twelfth year — what the hero (nayak) did — that I will tell. At that time, not much had happened differently. Our Bhaoji had a set timetable, and he followed it strictly. I will now write about it. His study schedule was fixed. He had great devotion to the Goddess (Devi). He would himself arrange the pujas (worship). When he sat down to do puja, truly nothing else would exist for him — such was his concentration...

Concentration — 12th Year's Account

...such concentration I have seen. I was not fully aware of this process at that age, but I noticed it somewhat — where did he get such power of meditation? This is my story about him. It was such that after puja and meditation and all was completed, after eating, he would sit down to study. At that time, an oil lamp would be lit. The house was upstairs, and one had to go to the upper room to study. Meanwhile, I and Mai (mother) would be playing some game — playing with dolls, playing chess, cards, or something like that.

Whenever he felt bored, he would come and sit where we were playing, and join in some game. When the boredom passed, he would go back to studying. Sometimes when he got bored, he would say, "Bring the mirror, let me see" — and he would make faces in the mirror, and then tell me, "If I were just a little different, would I have troubled you? Even if I were like Krishna, I would have troubled you, because you like it anyway." Such were his ways of driving away boredom.

Sometimes he would go to the backyard, and there he would read. He would think and reflect. At the time when people wash their feet, he would bark like dogs and puppies barking. And we had a flower garden at our door — monkeys would come to eat from the trees, and he would shout at the monkeys imitating sounds. The next day, people on the road would think, "There really must be monkeys and dogs here," and would look — but he was the one shouting! Sometimes when boredom came...

...he would chase me and my friend. Our parrot (Raghu) would get scared, and the lessons — what mischief for such young children! Both of us had to put our heads together to study. Sometimes such pranks would happen. But on Sundays, we would play a lot. Mostly, they would play the train game — he had prepared everything for it. I was a passenger and Bal (the child) was another role.

We would go here and there pretending to travel. When starting the train, our Bhaoji would recite a poem. He would say, "If I write it here, you will laugh at me — but I am going to write everything about him." The verse would go something like: "The great ones came... Shrimanta Raja came... the army gathered... they went to the holy place... from there they marched to Pune... when they arrived, the cannon was fired..." We would say this and give a big

push to the swing. We would all do this together — making funny faces — and then Bal would be asked: “What is Basdi?” Bhaoji would say, “I am Basdi (the train engine).” Then Bal would ask, “Then who is Aubadi (the brake)?” — “I am Aubadi.” Then, “Who is Kisna Appa?” — “I am not Kisna Appa. I am the ant of Goa (Goyvyachi Mungi).” Such was the play.

And another one was like this: everyone would meet and greet each other and say, “Who got up and came? Who sat down? Look at that! Look at this!” Such things...

...and another one was like this: “How should one obey orders?” and he would say, “A matchstick fell — how did it happen? It came from the side. Who is small? Who took me?” — doing such playful things. Days were spent in joy and fun.

If there was anyone of his age around, Bhaoji would be with them. Otherwise, we — the younger Bhaoji and I — were his companions. If he ever got a little angry at us, he would say, “I am not angry without reason.” Then I would approach Bhaoji and say, “Bhaoji, why are you angry at us today? Please tell us what wrong we did.” He would say, “I will not repeat my mistake,” and then would tell us something to make amends. And so things would settle and he would start playing again.

In the evenings, they would walk in the garden. He had a portrait of Sawai Madhavrao Peshwa which was printed — he copied it onto paper. One evening, when we were sitting on the swing, he showed it to me and to Nana, and we were very happy. After that, lying under the swing, he would make cross-eyed faces and stick his tongue out, and make scary faces — and we children would get frightened. Then he would say, “Bhag Vahini Bhani — look what eyes I made! Did it scare you?” While he was saying this, I said, “You are just joking around.” Then Bhaoji said, “Even if someone else’s fun may be going on, our Vahini — she is our own...”

“...she is a sister, and among sisters, a sister-in-law. What a brother-in-law would say to his sister, he cannot say to a Vahini (sister-in-law).” Saying this in Krishna’s playful manner, he pushed me outside, and I started crying. Then our Bhaoji came near me and said, “Sister, don’t cry. It’s alright. Your brother will come in a few days, and you’ll go to your in-laws’ place. You are a regular visitor. Don’t cry. Such things happen sometimes in life.”

Our Bhaoji had composed a song describing Sawai Madhavrao's playing of colors (Holi). After that, Bal's Munj (thread ceremony) took place, and another wedding happened. The Trimbakeshwari party went. The wedding ceremonies began. Our Bhaoji and others were to go together, and there was also some Trimbak group. They all went together to Gangadwari (the steps to the river).

While going down, on the side of the steps, there was a stream — the steps were steep and one had to be careful. Our Bhaoji descended about fifty steps, and then his foot slipped and he fell. While falling, Bhadrakali Aji (grandmother) and our brothers — the people behind them called out and came to see that two deep cuts had occurred on his knees and blood was flowing. Seeing this, a Gosavi (a holy man) who lived there quickly fetched water, washed the wound, filled it with medicinal powder, and Joglekar, the manager of Trimbak's house, tore his silk-bordered shawl and bandaged it. Then they returned, and after bathing and other rituals, they came back...

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...then we took all the procession items and went. May ended and June began. Our Bhaoji was to go to Nashik for studies. He had just entered his thirteenth year. He sat for the examination and within four months passed it. He came to Bhagur for the Ganapati festival (Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations). For the previous two years, he had been organizing the festival. At such a young age, he composed 60 verses (pade) and organized a procession (mela) of 78 boys. When Guruji (the teacher) was not at home, he gave his own clothes as costumes, appointed two flag-bearers and other roles, and the rest of the boys formed the procession.

In the first two years, they used to sing Abhangs (devotional hymns) etc., but he had composed his own verses. I remember some of them a little, and I am writing them here:

"Dinpati karya kara, baisa sajire / Prathuniya karyala lagavo bare / Satbhushni amhade Shri Gajamanana / Sedarcharachit iri mujhak vahana / Sakha sod chakratudai kasturi hila / Kebodar / Mangal kar rup sundara / Janun ya nami to mula ya kab-chhala / Uktaji aryahi arya bhumila / Swatane stri arya thav yekalo / Dinpati karya kara baisa sajire / Prathuniya kam ligamato bare."

This verse ended. These were the verses. There were more verses, but I don’t remember them.

Similarly, their procession — our Bhaoji had made a flag out of cloth. I am going to write about it in detail. Sawai Madhavrao’s color festival and other things — some things he had composed and set to music. They were given to the group. They came to Nashik. There, the studies began in earnest.

Then he had to go to study, and that could not be delayed. He would go for meals, and a place was also arranged for about six people. The festival area was wherever it could be managed — in the ghat area. The neighbor was Dada Joglekar. Then our Bhaoji’s sharp mind was always at work.

He was always among the first — wherever there was a gathering or assembly, he would go there and give some speech. He would regularly go to the library. His reading had grown enormously from a very young age. In Nashik, there were the Parkhe gentlemen who were well-known, and they were very close acquaintances of our Bhaoji. Wherever there was a gathering or an excellent event, the Parkhes would take our Bhaoji along, tell him everything, and have him accompany them.

Given such sharpness at that age, those who knew him would say, “What a sharp boy!” But then he developed a very severe eye disease, and to Guruji also...

...even then, he did not recover well quickly. Despite all the talk and treatment — I cannot remember the exact words now — in about fifteen days, things improved somewhat, and he started studying again.

One day, Mamaji was eating, and during the meal, Bhaoji made a mistake, and being so proud, he did not cry, and he did not speak to Mamaji either. At this time, one day a servant was hired, and the wage was supposed to be two annas, but four annas were given. Then Mamaji...

One incident happened — and just as it was being recorded, someone came, and casually, whether by accident or while holding a stick, the stick hit across the hand, and all the bangles on the wrist were crushed and started cutting. While trying to move back, the broken pieces filled the arm here and there, and at that time Bhaoji said, “Even if Mai Appa gets angry, just tell them this: yesterday I fell in the inner room (majghar), and that’s when the bangles broke.”

The next morning, Mamaji noticed and said, “Mai, everyone — your bangles were put on you, and how did they break today?” Then he told the story: “I fell in the inner room yesterday, and that’s when my bangles broke.” Then Mamaji said, “Tell the truth — is that really what happened or not?” Then she said, “Yesterday, someone was striking a stick, and I went near, and his stick hit me, and I hit him back, and I thought they would be angry with me, so I should tell them something else.” Then they said, “But he had told me to say what he told me first.” Mamaji got very angry and said, “Let him get up — I will give him a good thrashing with the cane right now.”

While he was saying this, our Bhaoji got up, and having heard the words, he began earnestly pleading with Mamaji: “Please don’t beat me. I will never speak like that again.” He kept pleading and pleading, and finally Mamaji did not beat him.

While all this was going on, I went to my maher, and then came back to my in-laws’ place. Bhaoji had gone to Nashik, and at that time, Lafekar, Ranade, and Dravid — he joined that group. And the whole account of what happened at Sarvatale — he wrote detailed notes about it, and from Savarkar, one...

...song was composed. Then, since the Nana Devi festivities had come, he went back to Bhagur again. Then Mamaji sent me a letter, and immediately I came.

Our Bhaoji had a great passion for writing. He understood the essence of everything and wrote a book. Whether this was accomplished or not — still, all this has been written. This is the thirteenth and fourteenth year’s account. Now the sixteenth —

My brother’s wedding was taking place, so we all went to Bhagur. The wedding was done with whatever means were available, managing the difficulties. Then some people went to Pune, and the new group also went. These two explored Pune together. Then Bhaoji and his companion were to go together. Everyone went and came back.

Then writing and composing continued. From these compositions, lectures were to be given. Among these, our group was left behind, and Bhaoji’s performances happened two or three times. In that, for a full year, current affairs and prizes were announced. And then — meaning our Bhaoji became a

class leader (vargidaar). Then high school started. The two of them went to high school, and prizes...

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...they went and returned within about twenty days. Then it was decided that they would go to Pune for further studies. Just as they were about to leave, in between, Bal fell ill and Mamaji's stomach started hurting badly. Mamaji told everyone, "Go to Nashik and perform the worship." So that was done, and Bhaoji came at the right time. Then I felt better. Then Mamaji said, "Go to Pune and perform the worship, and bring Mai."

So that was done, and the train started — we got on this train. Within one or two days, Mamaji felt better. Then, because there was plague in both Pune and Nashik, both of them stayed at home. Then Datar and Koltarkar Mami and the group came to stay at our house and...

...it ended. Mamaji and Bal both fell ill around the same time. Within ten days, the other Mamaji passed away, and we came to Nashik. Then he was admitted to the hospital, and someone had to stay to look after him. Bhaoji would deliver food every day and then go to school. This went on for two months.

Then Bhaoji's examination took place and he passed to the sixth standard. During Diwali, Bhaoji and the younger Bandu came home. Until then, we had been cooking separately, and then we combined the kitchen. Then they sent me to my maher, and the plan was to send someone to the in-laws' place from there.

Mamaji first checked the auspicious time and then arranged the cart. The first cart had already left; the second cart was found — it was an open one. We were to take Mother and the person with us. We placed the belongings on the bullock cart. Because the money was limited, we had not hired a proper cart. The cart was new, but the bullocks were not trained — the driver started taking the cart on a different route. But Bhaoji noticed from below, "Hey, this driver is inexperienced, yet he won't listen." Then Bhaoji got down, and he turned the bullocks' heads to the other side and guided them. It was about ten o'clock by the time we entered the village. The cart was still about two kos (a few miles) away. Then it started getting dark...

Then Bhaoji went to the nearby village and brought a hired bullock at a price. Then, around evening time, we reached Nashik. I and some others stayed at a house, and Bhaoji went straight back to Bhagur.

At this time, I was experiencing pregnancy for the first time. When I came home, Nana understood. Then, as always, Bhaoji said, “Tell me first what work you feel like doing, and I will get it for you” — but even though he said this, I felt shy to say anything. Once I asked for jujube berries (bore) to be brought. Then my cravings reduced.

We and Datar were living in the same place. His wife also had cravings. Someone said, “Whatever cravings she has, she should not be denied — give her whatever she wants.” And people on the road would say, “How does your wife do all this work?” And at Nashik, someone said to me, “You used to do everything, and now you can’t?” Then I told Nana, “My cravings are heavy.” I went to my maher for delivery.

Then plague broke out in Nashik, and it was decided that everyone would leave for some other place. Just then, the plague worsened, and two boils had appeared, and there was also a death. Then everyone said, “Tell Menatai to bring Vahini too,” but some said, “No, don’t bring her — she is pregnant, and only about twelve days are left until delivery.” So they did not bring me. Then I felt better, and everything settled. As planned, those who were to go, went. And after they left, Bhaoji composed some poems. And I entered my third month…

…and from Nashik, a letter came saying some trouble had occurred, so “send Vahini now.” Then I also went. One day, we had some fun — my grandmother-in-law (Ajje-Sasubai) asked me a question: “There is one mother-in-law who addresses the daughter-in-law by her maternal family relations.” So Bhaoji told me, “You know her — you call her by name yourself,” and he told me, “If you call me Bhaoji, I will not answer you.” From that day on, instead of calling him Bhaoji, I started calling him “Vasta” (a familiar name).

One day, Mother sat down for the evening lamp-lighting ceremony, and Vasta told me to sing a song. Mame-Sasubai said, “Don’t sing now.” But Vasta said, “Sing — whose Vahini are you? You are ours.” So, “Vahini, sing, sing!” Then I sang the song. Mame-Sasubai got angry. Many such days passed.

Then my schooling started, and I came to Nashik with Vasta. But immediately, for delivery purposes, I was kept at my maher for eight days, because my pregnancy term was about to be complete. Then I came home, and after eight or so days, Bal also came. Then we made a separate arrangement upstairs.

Then a relative's wife came to stay at our place. The reason was that she had been brought to Nashik to be shown to a doctor, but her condition was not revealed to her husband, so she was brought to our place. She and I had known each other since childhood — we were relatives. She stayed...

...openly and freely for eight to ten days, and then she was taken back. Other options were explored but nothing worked out. Then it was decided not to pursue it further.

But meanwhile, something happened that was not known to Vasta — the wedding procession and the ceremony were announced only eight days in advance. But Mami came, and then it became known that Vasta's wedding was to take place. He told them, "I will not marry. My studies must be completed first." Then the elders started insisting, and he — meaning Vasta — conveyed that "if they let me continue my studies, then finalize it on that condition." They agreed, and the engagement happened.

Then, for his bride's wedding, we went to Ozar. Tatya sat on the wedding platform — he looked very handsome. And as I describe — at the wedding, the groom's outfit was very long: a long angarkha (tunic) and the crooked headgear — but he looked so handsome that everything suited him perfectly. The same playful games and different, novel kinds of fun — and to all the ladies, he said, "Vahini, I am taking your name — you listen!" Many days passed.

The seventh standard examination was approaching, and what happened was — his eyes got severely affected again. The strain of the wedding and studies together — such difficulties came. And Vasta also fell very ill. But the examination was near. About the wedding, there is one story to tell — that today...

* * *

Once the wedding took place, one had to stay at the in-laws' house. The time came for the groom in the same manner. But I thought, such a dear friend — a soul-companion — I had never seen Vasta like this before. But about staying

there, nobody asked and nobody stayed to keep him company. In the end, they told him, “Vishnu, you stay.” Then those whom we call Bhau — the younger one — initially used to say certain things, but from those days onwards, the love between Vasta and Bhau became very deep, primary, and pure. It began to grow.

Then Tatya went to college. I felt very sad. He said, “I will come back soon in May,” and left. And then in May, he returned. As soon as he came, he would ask, “Vahini, what promises did you fulfill? Did you or didn’t you?” He would ask like this, and say, “Write this and that,” and would make suggestions and corrections. In the afternoons, during meals, he would read the newspaper. Such days — about one and a half months passed — and then he went back to Pune again.

Then the vacation came. He passed the seventh standard and came home. But during this time, he went to the in-laws’ place, took Bal along, stayed for five days and came back, left Bal there, and went back to Pune again.

Then, around May, we all went for the Munj (thread ceremony). At the in-laws’ place, everyone was saying, “What a fine young man! How well he carries himself!” Some offered betel leaves, some hosted feasts, some embraced him with their own affection — everyone wanted to sit and chat with him…

…everyone wished that he should be near us. The sweetness of his speech was something extraordinary. That joyous celebration at the in-laws’ place left us all feeling blessed. The entire Munj ceremony was completed. People went back. The bride was also taken back, and they were told, “Send her to her in-laws’ place.” But they didn’t send her.

And he told me, “I want to show you Mumbai on the way back.” Then he said, “You should go to Trimbakeshwar.” Then I felt very bad and started crying a lot. He said, “Why do you feel so bad? Come, we’ll go via Mumbai — won’t that be nice?” Then, having agreed, he first took me to Mumbai. Before that, I had never been beyond Nashik-Trimbakeshwar-Reveri village. We hadn’t seen Mumbai. We saw Mumbai and came home.

At that time, Bhau’s wedding had taken place. Then Bhau and Tatya went to Pune. When they came home again, because there was plague in Nashik, I was pregnant, so I went to Trimbak and stayed for about one and a half months. During this time, at Nashik, Vasta composed a song called “Shivaji”

— and Trimbak and that village area — the people there — even to the common folk, this sweet and loving and knowledgeable person brought a special kind of joy. He made me read it. During that time, usually ten to twelve people would be sitting at our home.

Then the vacation ended. Tatya and Bhau went to Pune. But because there was plague in Pune, they came back again. Just then...

...they were on their way back when our Vasta received an invitation, and there were some ceremonies to be performed. So I went to Nashik and made some arrangements. Mavshi-Sasubai, I, and Vasta's mother — we arrived at night. In the morning, Tatya, Bhau, and Shastribuwa and their group came. By then, my eyes had become affected.

Then we spent eight days in great joy. Tatya would sing songs, tell stories, have long conversations. Then we came to Nashik. After staying for about a year, they went back. Then Mahe-Sasubai was brought, and then Bai (the wife) was also brought. Bai got her first menstruation. It came on the new moon day. At that time, no Rutu-shanti (puberty ceremony) was performed.

Then I went to my maher, and Bai was also taken there. There, the younger Narayan came. On the auspicious day, we came to Nashik, and then the Rutu-shanti ceremony was performed. The bride sat as per the ritual. All the day's games and celebrations were done. At night, around 2:00 AM, the snacks ceremony took place.

But Vasta came to know the name, and he came and said, "Vahini, you must hear the name, because I have come here especially for this." Having said this — those were the days of the hot season. The Muslims used to bring ice, and he would tell me, "Keep ice for cooling the sherbet and for it to become cold." But if I sat eating the sherbet in front of him...

...he would say, "Eat the hot ones!" And I would get angry. Then, like Krishna's playful ways, he would say, "Why didn't you eat the sherbet earlier? Tell me! Will you eat it now or not? If not, I will eat it all myself." He was very fond of thalipeeth (a type of flatbread). Whenever I made it, as soon as it came off the griddle, he would quickly grab pieces and put them in his mouth. And whatever I tried to hide, he would find it and eat it. Then I would get very angry. But it didn't matter — he would say, "Whatever you've hidden, I'll find and eat."

He was very fond of hula (a sweet preparation). Whoever gave it, he would immediately become affectionate, and say, “Vahini, give me hula!” Even if he was writing something, every few moments he would put a piece of something in his mouth — eating like a monkey — just like Krishna’s playful nature. And the same cat-and-mouse game — hiding and finding — he would find things from wherever they were hidden and eat them again.

One such incident happened — I had made thalipeeth with ghee, and he came in from outside with five people, and with thalipeeth in hand, he went straight to Mother. Because at that time, there were many guests and things couldn’t be divided up. As soon as Tatya came, he asked, “Bhau, Nana — where is it?” Immediately they said, “He’s gone to Mother’s side.” He called out to come for the meal, but it was to no avail. Such things used to happen.

One time, something happened and then Vasta explained something. Then going forward...

...after that, he never let me eat with the guests alone. He would always ask, “Vahini, are you eating with the guests? I’ll tell you the arrangement myself.” Even if I said something about guests, he would say, “You wear a simple sari and go — you won’t feel comfortable otherwise. You need proper treatment.”

Such were his ways. I would try to placate him, and he would say, “Wait, let me stir it — I’ll tell you how it’s going.” After stirring three or four times, he’d say, “It’s come out well!” And then — “Is it for the guests?” — and immediately he’d put his hand in to taste and say, “Vahini, shall I make the flatbread? Shall I knead the dough? Shall I serve the leaves?” He would keep asking such things.

Then he would check, “Are the leaves cooked? Is it sweet enough or not?” — constantly tasting and checking. I would say, “I’ll do it. I’m not drinking the leaf-water now.” Such things he would say.

In this joyful manner, days were passing. Tatya would go to Pune, and I would feel very sad. After Tatya left, at Nashik, whenever there was some task, he would send word. He would say, “Vatya, Sakhu, Bhau, Baku and Bal are coming.” Sakhu went to her in-laws’, Laku went to her in-laws’ — “Now it’s just my work left.”

During those days, our Tatya was in college. He never just studied — he was always doing something extra: composing poems, writing articles, giving lectures in his group, attending gatherings wherever there was an assembly…

* * *

…he would do it himself, but he would tell everyone, “Write like this, compose such poems, do it this way.” All our group together would write one letter, and then it would be passed around — “So-and-so has written from Pune, now so-and-so should write” — and such exchanges would keep happening. Letters would come during examination time as well.

Once, I was very ill, and they sent me money from Pune and said, “Get proper medicine, and I will send more money if needed.” Tatya used to write regularly in college and in newspapers — poems, articles in the Kesari, in other papers — such fine writing. All this he did while still studying: the Powada (ballad) of Singhagad, the Powada of Bajiprabhu, the account of the Vishva-Dussmiti, various poems — he composed all of these. And he had written an article about how historical figures should be celebrated. For these poems, even at a young age, he received recognition and prizes.

The lectures happened, and even then, at a young age, he received recognition. He was always active and energetic — “do this quickly, do that quickly.” Some things from the past I am writing here; then those who read this may make corrections to what remains. Such was his way —

From childhood, whenever I sat down to eat, Tatya would sit next to me every day and say, like Krishna, “O Bhavati, give me a bite.” Once, a certain Mame-Sasubai had come to visit. While I was eating, Tatya came and said, “O Bhavati, give me a bite too.” Then the Mame…

…Sasubai told me, “Put a roti in his pallu.” When I actually put the roti in his pallu, he went to Mamaji and said, “Look, Vahini put a bhiksha (alms) in my lap!” Then Mamaji said, “You must have asked her for it — she gave it. Now let it be, say Ram.”

Once, it happened that he asked me to sing a song. First, I sang the Gajgalariche Gaane. He placed his hand in appreciation and said “Very good.” One day, he put the end of his dhoti over his shoulder and said, “I am a Nai (barber) — I sing the Gavya-Mauvari song,” and started singing. After one or two verses, they said to me, “Will you fill some oti-bharani (a ritual of filling

the lap with gifts) or not?" Then the lady applied kumkum and filled the oti. At that very time, Vasta went to Mamaji and said, "Mai filled my oti!" Then he said, "You stand in the middle — now tell your grievance." He said this and came back and said, "Did you do the oti-bharani? You filled Nana's oti!" He would keep doing such things. Then again, he said, "Do it once more, and this time I will be satisfied." Then there was contentment.

Just then, Vasta said, "I wasn't doing any oti-bharani myself — it was they who reminded me, and then I came to tell you." Then Mamaji said, "He did well — he's a clever rascal!" — saying this to Vasta.

Their routine included worship, devotion, playful fighting — they would wrestle with each other, and sometimes the fighting would go too far, and then they would make up…

…when things got heated, Tatya would run to me for shelter, and then I had no choice but to intervene. And again, like Krishna, he would say, "This is my distant relative," and would say whatever he pleased. It would make me very angry, but nothing could be done.

Once, there was such a fight — I was standing nearby — the fighting became so intense that I thought he was going to fall on me. I lay down on the cot. Then, instead of fighting further, Tatya started throwing onions. Then someone said, "They'll hit Vahini!" So the onion-throwing stopped and they went outside. Such mischievous behavior they used to do.

There were many mice in our house. Tatya would tell me, "Vahini, shoo them out — push them outside. I will stand here with the broom." So I would shoo them out, and he would keep swinging the broom, saying, "That mouse ran right over there!" Then he would say, "See how our Vahini accepted the mouse!" — and everyone would laugh at Tatya's antics.

Similarly, at our place, there were monkeys that used to come to eat from the trees. At such times, he would make me stand at the door and say, "Very well done, Vahini!" And if I felt scared, he would say, "Don't worry, I'm right here."

He was always after me with some prank or other. In my childhood, there used to be squirrels on the trees. He found them very fascinating. Vasta brought one down from the tree, caught it, and brought it near my ear, and placed it on my body…

...and those five squirrels were in the vessel — they would say “it’s a worm” to scare me. When it got a push, the vessel would ring and make a sound — he would bring it and say to me, like Krishna, “Look, I’ve brought something fun! Stretch out your hand!” He would make me extend my hand, and when I saw what it was, I would throw it and scream. He used to trouble me a lot. If I went somewhere — even to a neighbor’s place — he would follow me, and swing the broom, blow through a pipe, throw things in the middle — make such a mess. And then, before I came back into the house, he would quickly tidy everything up and sit quietly as if nothing had happened. And like Krishna, he would say, “Vahini, where had you gone leaving such a big mess? It was all the Gopis!” While all these games were going on, one year passed.

Then my second pregnancy — the days came, and I went to my maher for delivery. And Bai also — at that young age, she was experiencing pregnancy for the first time. Because there was plague in Trimbak, I returned early. My child also passed away. Then, after things settled, we held the Hodala ceremony feast for Bai. Then she went to her maher.

Then Vasta truly came home, and as usual, we would chat. But this time, since my daughter had passed away, he didn’t say anything immediately upon arriving. But in the afternoon, after all work was done, he said to me, “Vahini, Bai and I were not here...” Then he asked, “The girl — how many days was she? What happened to her?” Then I told him everything. He consoled me in many ways, then started on the next topic. Then one night...

...the two brothers had a long conversation. The topic was: “I will now study for the law. I will sit for the examination separately. And you will need to go forward from here. And Bhau — on the whole, Bal — as much education as possible must be given.” Such were the conversations that stretched until two o’clock at night.

I was sitting in the inner room, listening to all of this. There was some noise in my room, and he said, “Vahini, what are you doing? Are you walking about or writing?” I wasn’t doing anything. Then he said, “You rascal! You were listening to our conversation, it seems. Tell me, what all did you hear?” Then I told him some things. He said, “Very good — well done!”

Then he told me, “You should keep reading, sister — that’s fine — but also write something.” I said meekly, “I don’t know how.” Then he instructed me: “Like this — three small pages and two large ones — take out the paper and

write at leisure.” He dictated and I wrote it down. And then he told me, “Keep writing like this regularly.”

Then I remembered one old story about him. It was this: about a year after my marriage, Vasta came to Nashik to take me to the in-laws’. He had brought a cart and bullocks. My Mama (maternal uncle) had come to the house at about eight o’clock and said, “I have come with a cart, bullocks, and two servants to take my sister. We will leave in the morning.”

Then Vasta said, “Why are you going elsewhere for the night?” My mother and grandmother were very surprised — “What kind of boy is this, five or six…

…kos (miles) he’s going to travel to bring his sister-in-law! And the plague that is upon us — he has no fear at all! Our boys don’t have this kind of courage. How smoothly this boy speaks — his voice is so sweet and confident.” While my mother and grandmother were saying all this, Vasta arrived, and I went happily with him to Bhagur.

One more childhood memory comes to mind — it is this: whenever there was a festival or occasion, I and Tatya — Vahini would cook various dishes and serve them, and one would think she is young, but it never seemed so.

Once, it was Sankranti, and I had come to the in-laws’, and I hadn’t made halwa (a sweet dish). Then Tatya got very angry with me. What happened at that time regarding Mamaji — I now remember: for the government’s ceremony, Mamaji and others had been placed in confinement — just wearing simple clothes. Meanwhile, Mamaji was making preparations for something, and then Tatya did something — he freed the person and went to Mamaji’s…

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— End of Manuscript —